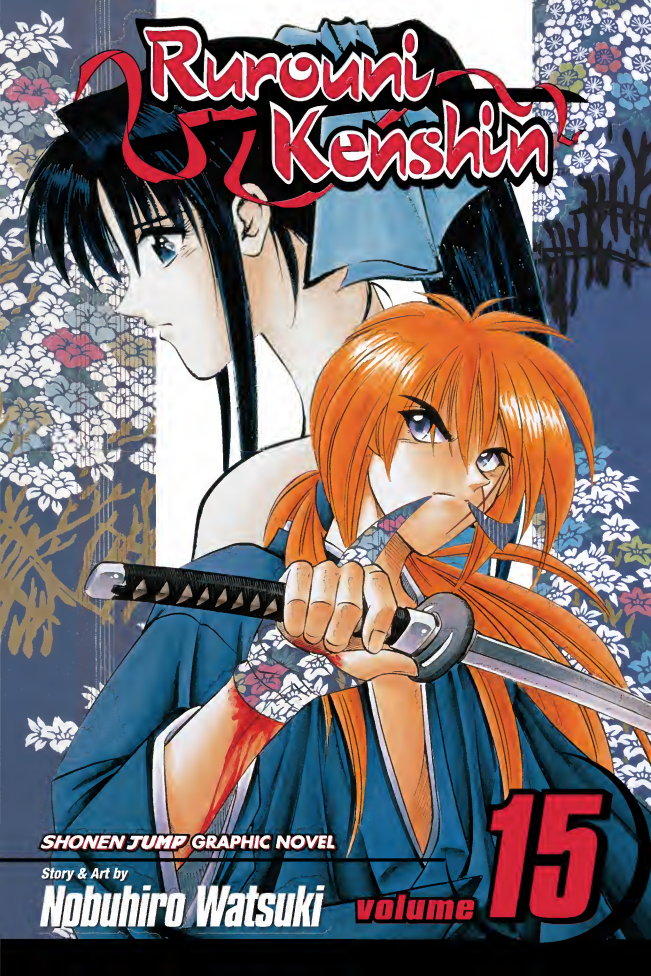


Rurouni Kenshin



SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

volume

15



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



SIGNING PARTY

THE OTHER DAY, I WENT TO A SIGNING BY JIM LEE, THE HIGHLY RESPECTED AMERICAN COMICS ARTIST. I BOUGHT A LITHOGRAPH FROM HIM AND, WHEN A 500-YEN COIN CAME BACK TO ME AS CHANGE, IT WAS DROPPED AND WENT ROLL-ROLL-ROLLING ACROSS THE FLOOR. AFTER SPEAKING WITH THE INTERPRETER, JIM LEE HIMSELF PICKED IT UP AND PUT IT BACK INTO WATSUKI'S HAND. MORE PLEASING TO ME THAN THE ACTUAL LITHOGRAPH, THIS COIN'S GOING TO BE THE GOOD-LUCK PIECE OF MY CAREER AS A MANGA ARTIST—I'M TAKING IT TO THE GRAVE! SO NERVOUS WAS I, THOUGH, THAT I NEVER GOT AROUND TO LOOKING AT HIS FACE. SUCKS TO BE ME!

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.

RUROUNI KENSHIN
VOL. 15: THE GREAT MAN vs. THE GIANT
The **SHONEN JUMP** Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

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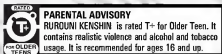
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SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin™



**MEIJI
SWORDSMAN
ROMANTIC
STORY**

**Vol.15
THE GREAT
MAN vs.
THE GIANT**

**STORY & ART BY
NOBUHIRO
WATSUKI**

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called Battōsai. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialist or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, Himura Kenshin is *ruromi*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.

志々雄
真実美



Shishio Makoto

瀬田
宗次郎



Seta Sōjirō

THUS FAR

Kenshin has journeyed to Kyoto to block the machinations of Shishio Makoto, the man who took Kenshin's place as *hitokiri* or government-sanctioned slayer of men. Along the way, Kenshin falls in with a girl—Misao, who intensely admires Shinomori Aoshi—and eventually fights a duel with one of Shishio's *Juppougatana* or "Ten Swords," Sōjirō. His first *sakabatō* broken and new *sakabatō*, "Shinuchi," in hand, Kenshin seeks out Hiko Seijūrō, master of Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū, to obtain the ultimate secret of that school: *Amakurera Ryū no Hirameki*. Together with Sanosuke and Saitō, Kenshin heads off Shishio's plans to burn down Kyoto and attack Tokyo by cannon from a battleship, leading to a final battle at Shishio's lair...a battle to which Kenshin goes promising Misao that he'll bring back Aoshi. First, Sanosuke fights the fallen priest, "Bright King" Anji, defeating him with the newly learned "Mastery of Three Layers"—only for Anji to reveal that, while Kenshin is being distracted, most of the *Juppougatana* are attacking Aoi-Ya, the inn where Misao and the others are mounting a desperate stand. Leaving Saitō to battle "Blind Sword" Usui, Kenshin hurries to dispatch the next opponent, Sōjirō...but now Aoshi stands in Kenshin's way. At last, Kenshin is able to defeat Aoshi—without reverting to his suppressed *hitokiri* self—but only by using *Amakurera Ryū no Hirameki*. Awakened at last to the madness of his obsession with being "the strongest," slowly the real Aoshi begins to return....

緋村
剣心
(人斬り
抜刀斎)



Himura Kenshin
(Hitokiri Battōsai)

相楽
左之助



Sagara Sanosuke

巻町
操



Makinachi Misao

本条
謙足



Honjō Kamatari

神谷
薫



Kamiya Kaoru

明神
弥彦



Myōjin Yahiko

四乃
森蒼紫



Shinomori Aoshi

比古
清十郎



Hiko Seijūrō

C
A
S
T

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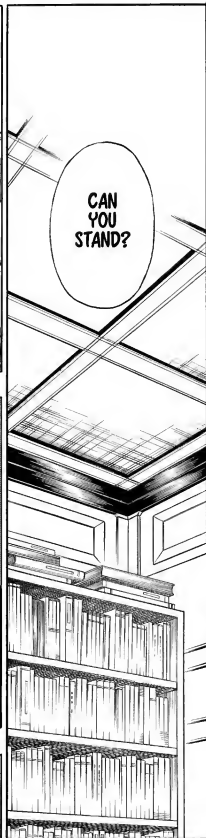
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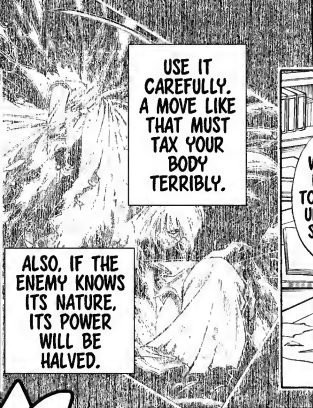
Act 121—The Battle of Aoi-Ya





MM.

YOU'RE
WISE.



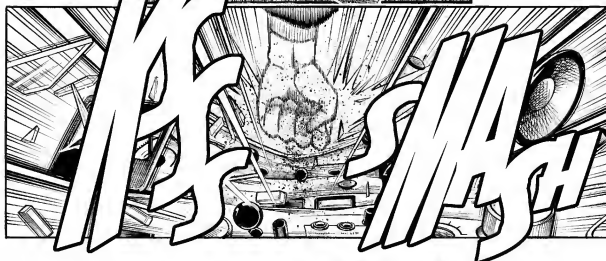
USE IT
CAREFULLY.
A MOVE LIKE
THAT MUST
TAX YOUR
BODY
TERRIBLY.

ALSO, IF THE
ENEMY KNOWS
ITS NATURE,
ITS POWER
WILL BE
HALVED.



"AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI."

WORTHY
INDEED
TO BE THE
ULTIMATE
SECRET.



KENSHIN!
THERE'S NO TIME!
LET'S GO!!



RRG!



ALL RIGHT.
NOW I FEEL
A LITTLE
BETTER.



仲宏
和月

Act 121 The Battle of Aoi-Ya

RUROUNI
KENSHIN

KARIWA
HENYA

るるに烈心
力羽編也









WELL,
FUJI?
SHALL
WE...



HO
HO HO
HO HO.

HOW
BORING.
IT'S LIKE
HUNTING
RATS.



YAAHHH!

YAAHHH!

YAAHHH!

...GO
JOIN OUR
FRIENDS
AT
AOI-YA?



A M-
MONSTER...!!

FORGET
THE OTHERS!
LET'S START
THIS FIGHT!

I'M
DAMNED
TIRED OF
HOLDING
THIS POSE.

NOW!!



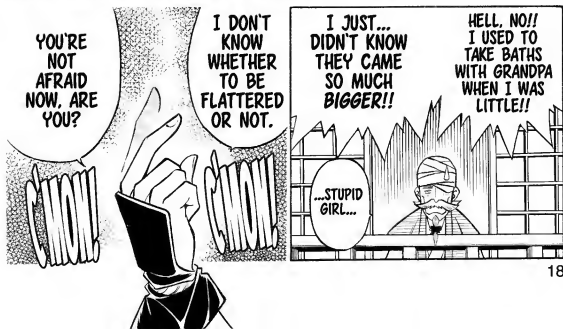
IF I'M TO
HELP THE
REST OF
THEM...

...I'VE
GOT TO
DEFEAT
THIS
SCYTHE-
WOMAN!

BUT IT'S
COSTING
US SO
MUCH
TIME!

DON'T
LET HER
GET TO
YOU.





C-CALM
DOWN,
WILL
YOU?

ATTACK
NOW, AND
YOU FALL
RIGHT
INTO HIS
TRAP!

AFRAID?!
OF
YOU?!

GROWL

KILLYOU
キルユー

ING



WHAT ARE
YOU IDIOTS
DOING?!

YAHIKO,
NO—
WAIT!

I'LL
TAKE
YOUR
POST, SO
YOU CAN
JOIN
MISAO,
AND—

YAHIKO!

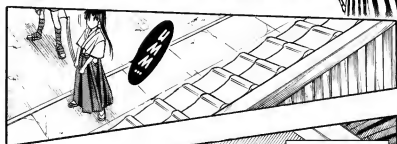
KAORU, I
CAN HANDLE
THIS. MISAO
NEEDS YOUR
SUPPORT!!





SO
TRUST
YOUR
STUDENT
!!

YOU'VE
BEEN
TRAINING
ME TO
HANDLE
MYSELF,
HAVEN'T
YOU?!



WE'LL HAVE
TO GO
ALONG WITH
YAHIKO
FOR NOW.

NOD

WE HAVE
NO CHOICE.
WE CAN'T
LET MISAO
FIGHT ALONE.
NOT IN HER
CURRENT
STATE.



TWO-ON-
ONE'S
FINE
WITH
ME...

ESPECIALLY
TWO GIRLS,
ONE BOY.

HEH



...ALL
RIGHT.

WE'LL
PLAY IT
YOUR
WAY...

I'M NOT
ABOUT TO
ALLOW
YOU TO
DIE HERE.

BUT
YOU'VE STILL
GOT A LOT
OF TRAINING
TO DO.

BETTER
NOT!

WON'T
HAPPEN!

MISAO-
CHAN?!

LET'S
GO!!



YOU'D SIGH TOO, IF YOU...



HEY!!

WHAT'S THAT SIGH ABOUT, HUH?!

RRG!



BUT I
COME HERE
ACCORDING
TO SHISHIO-
SAMA'S
ORDERS...

I HAD HEARD
THAT THE WIELDER
OF A KENJUTSU
STYLE CALLED
HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ
DANCES IN THE
HEAVENS WITH
THE SPEED OF
WINDS.

...AND
LOOK
WHAT
I GET.
"SIGH"

FOR A
MEMBER OF THE
JUPPONGATANA,
IT IS A LIFE'S
DREAM TO
FIGHT SUCH
A ONE.



...HAS COME
FROM WATCHING
THAT "HEAVEN
DANCER" YOU
DREAM SO
MUCH OF
FIGHTING!

I MAY BE
YOUNG,
BUT WHAT
SWORDSMANSHIP
I'VE
LEARNED...

...AM
NOT JUST
"ONE LITTLE
BOY."

FOR
ONE, I,
MYŌJIN
YAHIKO...



OH...?



I'VE
SEEN
KENSHIN'S
BATTLES...

...MORE
CLOSE-UP
THAN
ANYONE!!



YOUR
FIRST INSULT
OF HENYA,
"THE FLIGHTED,"
WILL BE YOUR
LAST!!

I WILL
NOT
KILL YOU
QUICKLY!!



Rurouni Kenshin



Act 122
Put to the
Test (Boy)



THIS
ISN'T FOR
KILLING
YOU.

YOU SAY
YOU WON'T
KILL ME
QUICKLY,
BUT THEN...

...YOU
WHIP OUT
DYNAMITE?!
YOU'RE
NUTS!!





...IS FOR
LIFTING
UP ME!

NK!

Act 122 Put to the Test (Boy)

仲宏
和月

多々上
剣心

RURONI
KENSIN

明神
弥彦

MYŌJIN
YAHIKO





**"FIRE
FLIGHT"
!!**

**THIS
IS WHAT
MAKES
HENYA
INVINCIBLE...**

**ALSO, YOU
CAN'T STRIKE
BACK IF
I'M IN THE
AIR!!**

**WHATEVER
MARTIAL ARTS
YOU MAY HAVE
MASTERED,
ABOVE YOUR
HEAD WILL
STILL BE A
BLIND SPOT!**









ACK!



THESE
PAWNS
ARE
EASILY
REPLACED.



AT THIS RATE,
YAHIKO WON'T
STAND A CHANCE!!

YAHIKO!!

TO FLY FREELY
WITH THE WINDS
OF EVERY BLAST,
HE'S STARVED
HIMSELF DOWN
TO HIDE AND
BONE...





DOOM DOOM



CROM

CROM

CROM

**DAMN
IT!**



**I CAN'T
DO ANYTHING
WHILE HE'S
STILL UP
OVER ME!**

**FROM
WAY UP
THERE, HE
CAN SEE
EVERY
MOVE I
MAKE...**

IF I
COULD
GO
OVER
HIM....!!

AND
YET...

HF

HF

HF

...BUT
THAT'S NOT
SOMETHING
I CAN
HOPE TO DO.

ENG

KENSHIN
COULD
RIDE THE
EXPLOSIONS.
NO
DOUBT...

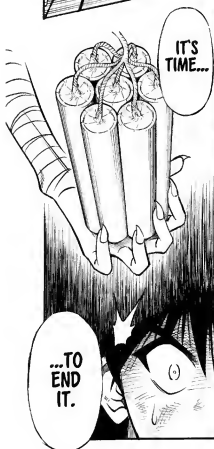
I'LL BET
HE'S
NEVER HAD
ANYONE
OVER HIS
HEAD.

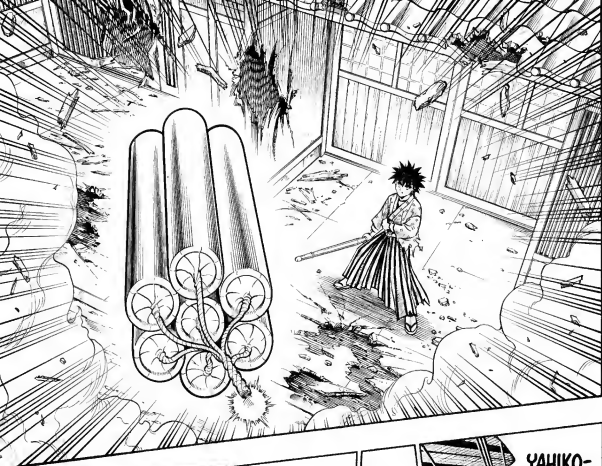
...NO.
SOMETHING
TO TAKE
THE PLACE
OF WINGS!!

IF I
ONLY HAD
WINGS,
I...

AKG

IT'S
PROB'LY
EVEN HIS
ONE FATAL
FLAW!





ONE THING
I WON'T DO
IS RUN—!!

I PROMISED
KENSIN
I'D DEFEND
THIS
PLACE.

RUN?

WITHOUT
GETTING
IN EVEN
ONE HIT?

MAYBE
I'M NOT
GOOD
ENOUGH
TO BEAT
HIM,
BUT...

YAHIKO-
KUN,
RUN!!

GET
INSIDE
OF AOI-
YA!!

OH
...!





NO ONE
EVER SEEMS
TO LAST
AGAINST
MY "FIRE
FLIGHT."



SIGH.

TOO
EASY.

RR
RR
RR
MM
MM
MM
MM



...AND
CLEAN UP
THE REST.

NOW, TO
PUT THESE
LAST
CHARGES TO
WORK...



YAHIKO
...

?!

GOTCHA.



DOWN...

...FROM
ABOVE
ON
THE
DOOR
?!



HYAAH!!



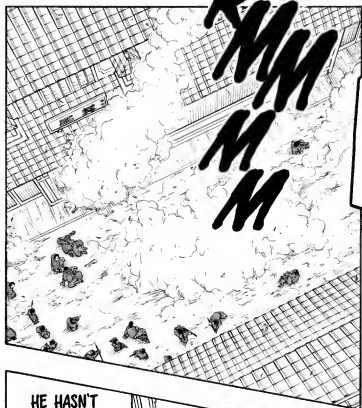
NNH!

MIYŌMINANE
"HOMAGE HIT"...

見様見真似
みようみまね

龍槌閃
りゅうづいせん

...RYŪTSUISEN
"DRAGON-HAMMER
STRIKE"!!



HE HASN'T
JUST BEEN
PASSIVELY
WATCHING
HIMURA FIGHT
HIS BATTLES.
HE'S BEEN
LEARNING...

MIYŌ-
MIMANE...
TRAINING
BY EYE!

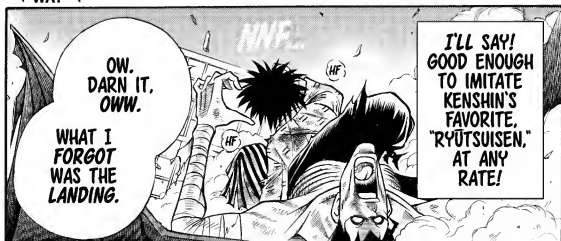
HE
DID
IT!!

...MAKING
HIMSELF
TWICE AS
GOOD!



...





OW.
DARN IT,
OWW.

WHAT I
FORGOT
WAS THE
LANDING.

I'LL SAY!
GOOD ENOUGH
TO IMITATE
KENSIN'S
FAVORITE,
"RYÜTSUSEN,"
AT ANY
RATE!



...IS
GOING
TO BE
GREAT!!

THIS
BOY...



WELL...

...NOT
AS
GREAT AS
KENSIN!

仲月宏



Act 123
Put to the
Test (Girl)



**NOW
ONLY
TWO
LEFT!**









SHE
AND I
AREN'T SO
DIFFERENT.

LITTLE
...?!



OHO!

YOU,
AT LEAST,
SEEM MORE
FOCUSED
THAN YOUR
LITTLE
FRIEND!

TP



...I
STAND HERE
AS NEITHER
MAN NOR
WOMAN, BUT AS
A MASTER OF
THE SWORD
ONLY.

FOR THAT
MATTER,
NEITHER ARE
YOU AND I.
ONCE I PUT
ON THIS DOG!
AND TIE OFF
THIS BELT...



...PERHAPS
A BIT.



IN THAT
SENSE,
LIKE YOU.



I AM
KAMATARI
"THE SCYTHE," OF
THE JUPPONGATANA—
NO RUN-OF-
THE-MILL
SWORDFIGHTER!

BUT
A GREAT
DEAL
WEAKER,
THOUGH!

WHICH MUST
WEIGH 8 KAN,
AT LEAST!*
SUPER-HEAVY
WEAPONS DO
SUPER-HUGE
DAMAGE...

*8 KAN=30KG, OR 78LBS.



MISAO.
LOOK
AT HIS
WEAPON.

THAT'S
WHAT
WE'LL
FOCUS
ON.

...BUT, WHEN
THEY MISS,
THEY ALSO
LEAVE YOU
WIDE-OPEN.

A
SCYTHE,
RIGHT
...?

YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO ASK ME
TWICE!

WSH



HEH





MISAO-
CHAN,
NOW!!

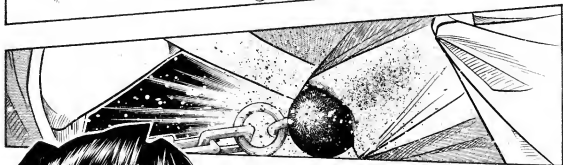


HYAAAAH!!

GOT
YOU!!

WOK



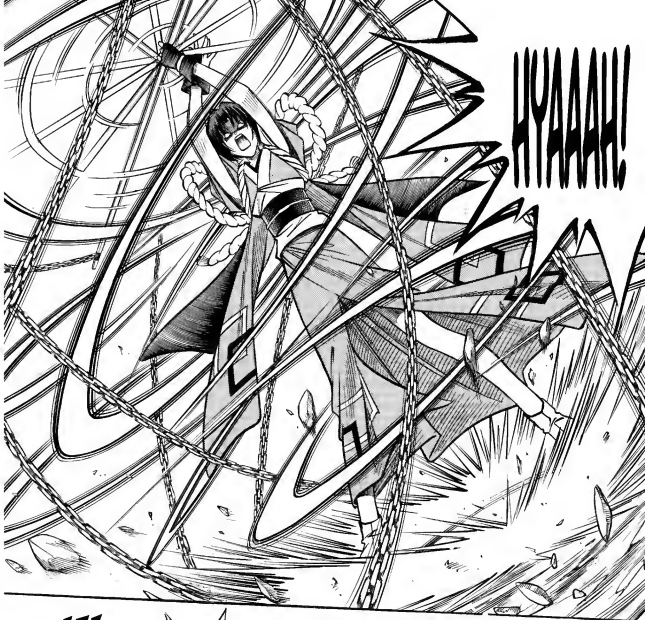


THE
COUNTER-
WEIGHT...

MISAO-
CHAN!

TM





HYAAAAH!



"MIDARE
BENTEN!"



HERE
IT
COMES!



KAMATARI'S
SURE-
FIRE...



THE
BATTOSAI
HAS KEPT
HIS
PROMISE.



WHOSE
VOICE
IS...?

MISAO-
SAMA.



WHO
...?

...SAMA?



HE MUST
HAVE
BEEN...
WORRIED
ABOUT
ME.

HAN'NYA-KUN
ALWAYS DID
TAKE CARE
OF ME,
SHOWING THE
SAME LOYALTY
TO ME THAT
HE SHOWED
AOSHI-SAMA...

HE IS...?





CAN'T...
FIGHT...

MY...
RIBS!



...CAN
I
DO...?

N
N
G

AND
YET...

...WHAT
ELSE...

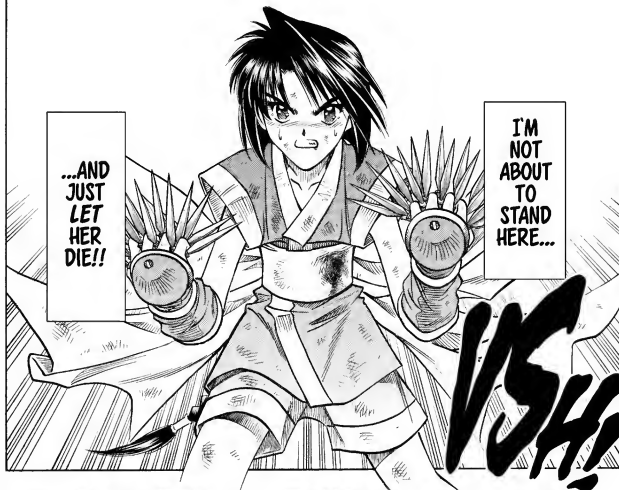


THROW

UGH!!



KAORU-
SA...



...AND
JUST
LET
HER
DIE!!

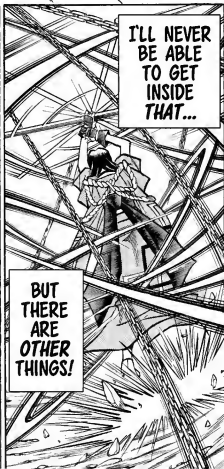
I'M
NOT
ABOUT
TO
STAND
HERE...

VSH!



**BE
READY!**

**KAORU-
SAN...**



I'LL NEVER
BE ABLE
TO GET
INSIDE
THAT...

BUT
THERE
ARE
OTHER
THINGS!

TING
TING
TING

KANSATSU
"PIERCING"...

貫殺 かんさつ

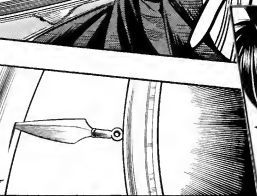
WHERE'S
THE
POINT?

HYAH!!

...TOBIKUNAI
"FLYING
DAGGERS"!!

飛苦無 とびくなく!!

DON'T
YOU GET
IT?!





The Secret Life of Characters (36) —Kariwa Henya—

The model is Matsubayashi Henyasai, a real swordsman during the early Edo period. Adept in what we'd now call acrobatics, in a sense you could say Henyasai's "avoidance techniques" were a precursor for Kenshin's style, as well. *RuroKen's* Henya was originally slated to debut as a Tengu (a mythological being from Japanese folklore), back during the "Megumi" story arc, as one of the Oniwabanshū. That story, though, ended up being not as well-planned as it otherwise might have been, and the chance was lost, meaning Henya would have to become one of the Juppogatana. The plan was to engage him in mid-air battle with Kenshin, but once the thought occurred that he "couldn't possibly be a proper opponent for Kenshin, not now that he's finally acquired the secret move," the next logical person—Yahiko, who tries to follow in Kenshin's footsteps—was substituted instead. Though some readers have raised the concern, "Yahiko is too strong as it is" (um... what?), Watsuki's feeling is that Yahiko ought to at least be at this level of competence, all things considered. Then again, Yahiko is a character in progress, and so thinking of him as "weak" is not inconsistent.... The explosive-flight thing, well, that was something I liked. I wish I could have done more with it.

The model in terms of design, essentially, is a bat, with a streamlined head and a little bit of "Cyborg 002" from *Cyborg 009* thrown in for good measure. Because, in the original concept, no one in the Juppogatana were supposed to be "lookers" (aside from Sōjirō), Henya was created to be monster-like. (Eventually, Kamatari and Fujii would be thrown in, as well.) But there were those who said he was *still* too good-looking, so I made his body super-emaciated. A character from *Spawn* called "The Freak"—your average, multiple-personality crazy type—was there as a reference, too.



仲月
和宏

HONJŌ
KAMATARI

RURŌUNI
KENSIN

Act 124

The Shadow of Despair

多うに剣心
木条録足





TSK.



MISAO-
CHAN,
WAIT.



HUH?

YOU
TAKE HER
DOWN,
KAORU-
SAN!

THIS
IS IT, THE
TURNING
POINT!!

SLAP





WITH
YOUR GIANT
SCYTHE GONE,
YOU'VE LOST
YOUR MEANS
TO VICTORY.
ANY MORE
FIGHTING IS
MEANINGLESS.



KAMATARI...
SAN. WON'T
YOU TURN
BACK?



NOT ONLY
DID HE BREAK
MY RIBS, THE
SICK FREAK
FLASHED ME!

WAIT, WAIT!
REVENGE
ISN'T
MEANINGLESS,
NOT TO
ME!



...NO.

OUR
TEACHING
IS NOT TO
KILL OUR
OPPONENTS,
BUT TO
CONQUER
THEM.

THE PATH
OF KAMIYA
KASSHIN-RYU
LEADS TO
KATSUJIN-KEN...
THE SWORD
THAT BRINGS
LIFE.



YOU'VE
LOST YOUR
MEANS TO
VICTORY,
TOO.



HEH.
YOU
MAKE
ME
LAUGH.

I CAN
STILL FIGHT
WITH THE
HANDLE.

AND SO,
EVEN IF
I HAVE NO
BLADE...



STILL...

I HAVE
MY OWN
CONTINGENCY
FOR A
BROKEN
WEAPON.



SHP

WHY, I
BELIEVE
YOU'RE
NOT
BLUFFING!





DON'T
BE
STUPID.

FACED
WITH
KAORU-SAN,
IT'S FINALLY
REAL TO
YOU, HUH?

YOU'VE
LOST
YOUR
PRETTY
SMILE,
GIRLIE.

...IS NO
GAME,
AND
NEVER
WILL
BE.

IT'S
NO LIE.
BEING
WHO I
AM...





NO MATTER HOW
HARD I TRAIN, I
WILL NEVER BE
RESPECTED WITHIN
THE JUPPONGATANA
AS IS SŌJIRO.

NO MATTER HOW
FEMININE I AM,
I WILL NEVER BE
LOVED AS IS YUMI.

...NEITHER AS
A MAN, NOR AS
A WOMAN.

I WILL
NEVER PLEASE
SHISHIO-SAMA...

...AND SPEAK
MY LOVE THROUGH
UNQUESTIONING
LOYALTY.

ALL I CAN DO
IS CARRY OUT
THE ORDERS HE
GIVES ME...

I
CANNOT
JUST
"STEP
ASIDE"!!

KAMATARI
EXISTS
ONLY AS A
STRENGTH
TO SHISHIO-
SAMA!!







つか
柄の下段

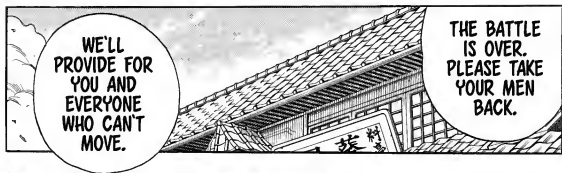
...TSUKA
NO GEDAN
"HANDLE"
ATTACK!

かみ
や
神谷活心流

KAMIYA
KASSHIN-
RYU...

!!!



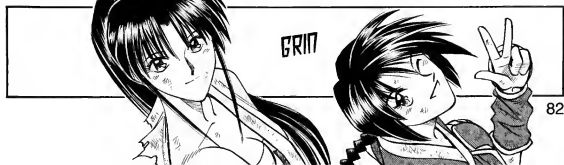














SO, YOU
HAVE
DEFEATED
THEM
ALL.

HOW
NICE.

?!

NOW
WE HAVE
YOU ALL
TO OUR-
SELVES!

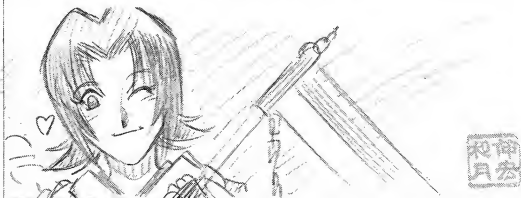


The Secret Life of Characters (37) —Honjō Kamatari—

It all started with a play on words by one of the assistants: In Japanese, slang for homosexual is "*okama*," and scythe is "*kama*." As said elsewhere, many of the Juppōgatana were developed by Watsuki after suggestions from the assistants, and one upon which I seized immediately was Kamatari. When we came down to specifics, though, the concept just wasn't coming together. At the start, I'd been thinking, "The character will be male-appearing on the surface, but personality-wise, will be feminine." Or, "A very erotic and seductive, womanly appearance from the outside, but a manly man on the inside." Or, "A big, macho, gay guy." All these ideas came and went, becoming a huge tangle. In the midst of it all, a friend said, "Why not just a 'pretty girl' type?" I'd frankly thought Kamatari would be just another garden-variety character, but then he placed 10th in the popularity contest... proving, in manga, that it's not always good to think things out *too* much.

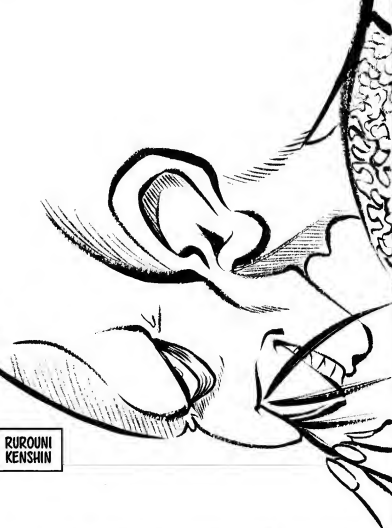
Personality-wise, the idea was to make him light-hearted and cheerful, but then a more serious side started to emerge, and so I...well, let's say I have my regrets. (There's a fine line between "serious," and "depressing," and it's one of Watsuki's bad habits to cross that line...all of which proves that, as a writer, I'm sometimes pretty immature.) To make his outlook sunny, while still keeping the essential self intact—that'll be my challenge, the next time we meet Kamatari.

The visual model for the face is, simply enough, "Ikari Yui" from *Evangelion* (hey, at least I didn't fall back to "Rel" or "Asuka"), only making the hair black, showing more forehead, and having the back of the hair flip out as I've seen so many high-schoolers do these days. Watsuki-style adjustments were then performed to make it all less obvious. The body is something I just cooked up on the spot, so there's no model for that. The triangular silhouette, I've realized, was influenced by "Rel-Itel" from *Vampire Hunter*. The weapon—Kamatari's giant chain-scythe—is something that actually exists. For Kamatari's use, though, I made the blade bigger, to give it a real super-impact look. Obviously, it could never be used as Kamatari uses it in the story (or, I should say, it *ought* never be used that way). The real giant scythe is a normal chain-scythe with a longer handle, and it's used like a cross between a chain-scythe and a traditional tree-branch staff. Since it's such an interesting weapon, maybe I should have made sure that Kamatari used it the *right* way...ah, you see? Now I'm disappointed.



仲宏
和月

Act 125 Descending!



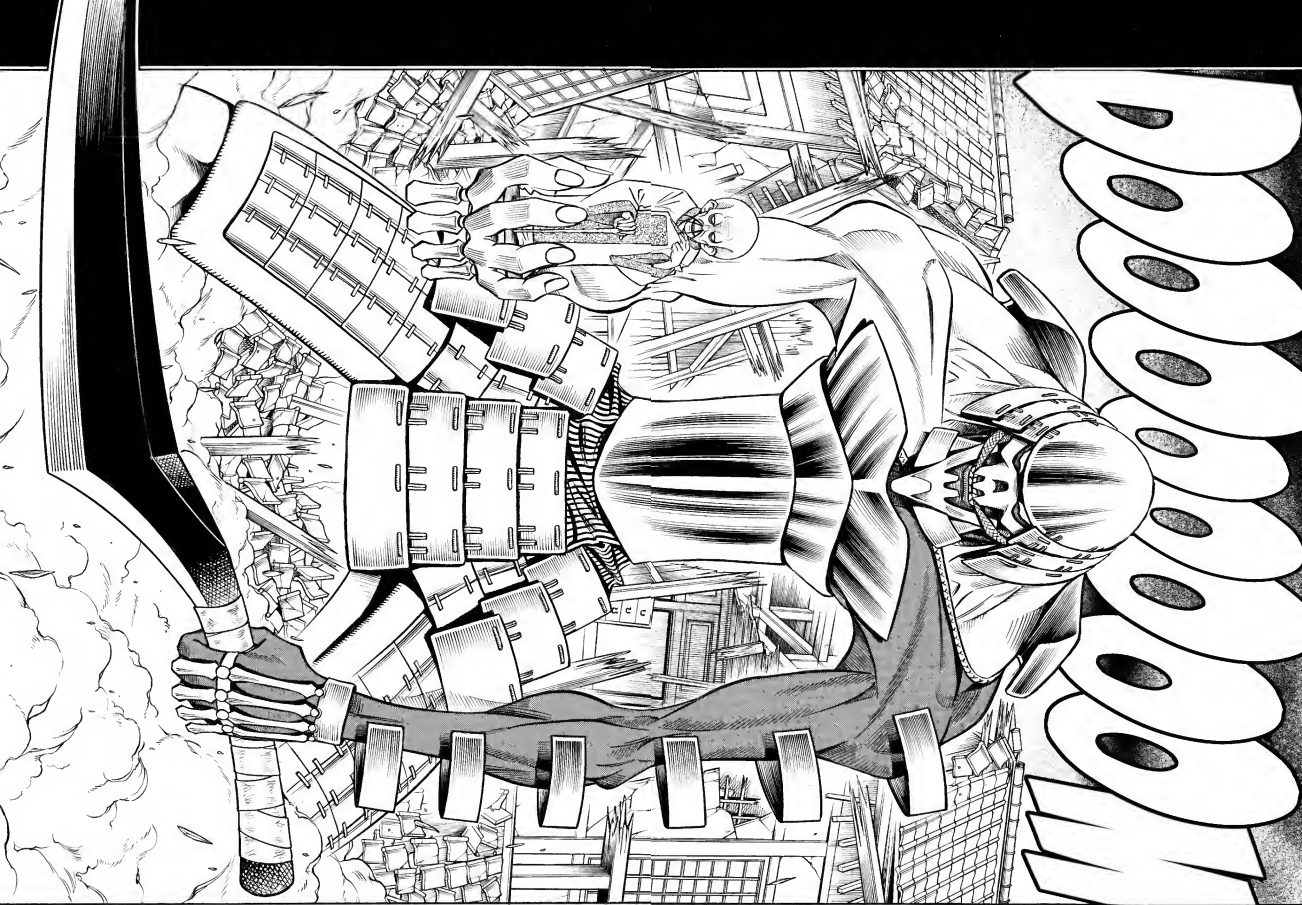
才穂老人

(本名不明)

るろに心

RURONI
KENSIN

ELDER SAIZUCHI (REAL
NAME UNKNOWN)





...IS
THE
END.

THIS...



WILL
YOU ALL
EMBRACE
YOUR FATES
GRACIOUSLY,
THEN?

HO HO
HO HO
HO.

EXCELLENT.
THE WISE
MORTAL
ACCEPTS THE
INEVITABLE.

AND THEN
SOME
FREAKIN'
MONSTER
POPS OUT
AT THE
LAST...!

WE'VE ALL
FOUGHT
THIS FAR,
NEARLY
DYING...

JUST
WHEN
AOSHI-
SAMA'S
COMING
BACK,
TOO...

...DAMN
IT...

...I
KNOW.

KAORU-
SAN...

THAT,
OR...

I
PROMISED
WE'D GO
BACK TO
TOKYO
TOGETHER.

I'M
NOT
GIVING
UP,
EITHER.



**NOT
YET,
WE
WON'T
!!**

...WE'D GO
TOGETHER...

...TO
THE
GRAVE.

**NOT
UNTIL...**

...NOT
OVER...
YET...

IT'S...

HH

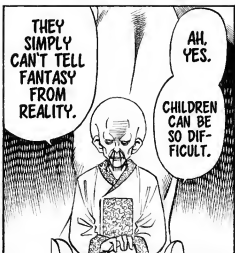
HH

HH

...KENSIN
COMES,
IT'S
NOT!

YAHIKO!







I
WOULD
CALL IT...
CLOSE TO
ZERO.



ONE. YOUR
HOPE THAT
HIMURA
BATTOSAI
WILL
RETURN.

REALLY,
NOW,
HOW
LIKELY
IS THAT?



THAT
TRUTH
BLAZES LIKE
BATTOSAI'S
FUNERAL
PYRE.

DEAD
MEN RETURN
TO THE
OTHER WORLD.
NOT HERE.

ONCE
SHISHIO-SAMA
FIGHTS, HE
ALWAYS
WINS.



...BUT, STILL, IT
WOULD TAKE TWO
TO THREE HOURS
TO GET HERE.

OF COURSE,
HIMURA MIGHT
RUN BACK WITH-
OUT FIGHTING...



IT'S QUITE A
FEAT TO FEND
OFF THREE OF
THE JUPPONGATANA
WITH JUST
WOMEN AND
CHILDREN.

I
ACKNOWLEDGE
THE
ACHIEVEMENT.

TWO.
LET'S
APPLY
A
SIMILAR
ANALYSIS
...

...TO
THE
STRENGTH
OF YOUR
FORCES.

ANKLY,
OUR
NGTH IS
SEQUEN-
AL.

HOWEVER,
THAT BATTLE
HAS LEFT YOU
ALL SEVERELY
INJURED.

THIS WILL
BE EASIER
TO SHOW
THAN
EXPLAIN.

FUJI
?

THIS WILL
BE EASIER
TO SHOW
THAN
EXPLAIN.

FUJI
?

THE
ARMY
CALLED
HAGUN.

THE
ARMY
CALLED
HAGUN.





...WHAT
OF IT?

YEAH,
SO...



YAHIKO
...?

**I STILL
BELIEVE IN
KENSIN,
NO MATTER
WHAT
YOU SAY!**

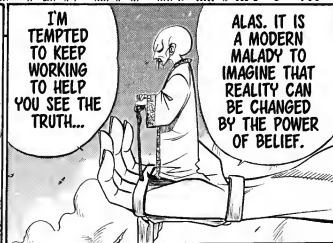


**TO
HELL
WITH
YOUR
LOGIC!**



**YOU'RE
ABOUT
TO
DIE.**

...BUT
WHY?



**I'M
TEMPTED
TO KEEP
WORKING
TO HELP
YOU SEE THE
TRUTH...**

**ALAS. IT IS
A MODERN
MALADY TO
IMAGINE THAT
REALITY CAN
BE CHANGED
BY THE POWER
OF BELIEF.**

YAHIKO!



KENSHIN!



**KENSHIN
!!!**







GOOD
JOB,
BOY.

YOU
HAD YOUR
HEART IN
THAT.

FWSHH



**...YOU
WIN
THIS
FIGHT!!**

**AND FOR
BELIEVING
IN MY IDIOT
APPRENTICE
'TIL THE
VERY END...**

Rurouni Kenshin



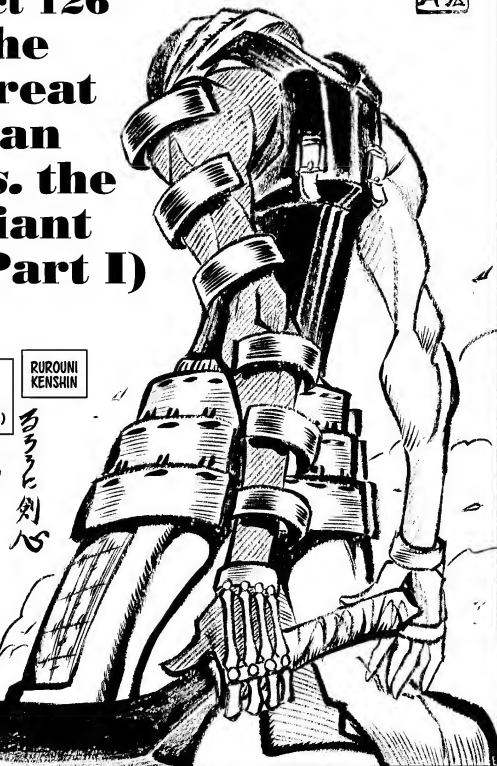
Act 126 The Great Man vs. the Giant (Part I)

FUJI
(REAL
NAME
UNKNOWN)

RURONI
KENSIN

ろくにん 剣心

不二
(本名不明)





NNNN!!!



IT'S...

HIM!!!





HIMURA'S
MENTOR...
AND THE
CURRENT
MASTER
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ!!

HIKO!
HIKO
SEIJŪRŌ!!

HE JUST
BROKE...
THAT
MONSTER'S
BLADE...

...IS
HE?!

WHO...



...IT
WAS
HIM!!

THE
COUNTER-
MEASURE
HIMURA
TALKED
ABOUT
BEFORE...



NO
WONDER
YOU CAN
DEFLECT
FUJI'S
GREAT
SWORD.

I SEE...SO
YOU ARE
THE HITOKIRI
BATTŌSAI'S
MASTER!

NOW,
THEN...

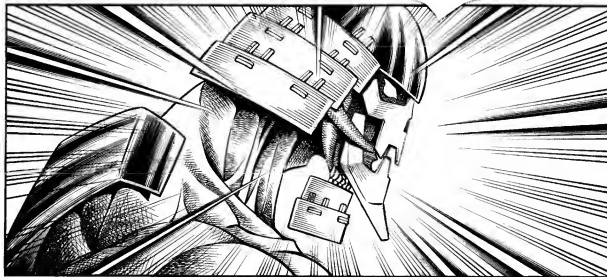
SHALL
WE
BEGIN?

JUST AS THE
STRONGEST
ANT IS
NOTHING
TO A GREAT
ELEPHANT...

BUT IT
IS NOT
ENOUGH!!

...THERE IS
NO HUMAN
BEING TO MATCH
THIS MONSTER
CALLED FUJI
HAGUN!





...TO
THAT
MONSTER?

...TALK-
ING...



DON'T
LISTEN,
FUJI!

NOT AT ALL
SOMETHING
ONE WOULD
EXPECT...

YOU USED THE
TIGHTENING-
GRIP OF
KENJUTSU
QUITE
EXPERTLY.

THAT
WAS A
GOOD
SWING,
FUJI.

I'M THE
ONLY ONE
YOU
SHOULD
HEAR!!

...OF A
MINDLESS
MONSTER.



YOU NEED
THINK OF
NOTHING ELSE—
EXCEPT HOW
TO BEST
REPAY THAT
DEBT!

WHO TOOK
YOU IN WHEN
THOSE
PEASANTS
TRIED TO
KILL YOU
BECAUSE OF
HOW YOU
LOOK?!

I DID,
THAT'S
WHO!

OLD
MAN
!!

I'LL
DEAL WITH
YOU LATER.

I SAID,
I'M TALKING
WITH FUJI
NOW.

INDEED
THE MASTER...

SCARY...!

ATTACK
AGAIN IN
THAT HEAVY
ARMOR, AND
YOU'RE
DOOMED.

NOW...
WHERE
WAS I?

OH, YES.
THAT WAS
A GOOD
BLOW...

...BUT
YOU WON'T
BE ABLE
TO BEAT
ME LIKE
THAT.

ARMOR...?

♡ TAKE
ME
NOW!!

BET HE
CAN BACK
IT UP,
TOO!

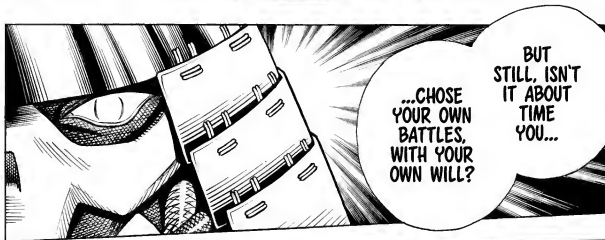
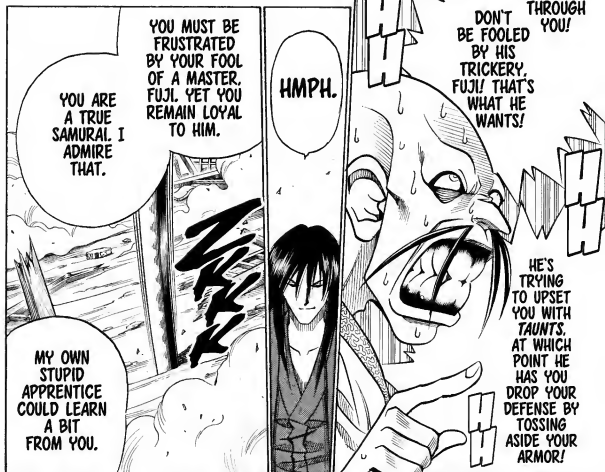
COULD
HE BE
ANY MORE
CONFIDENT
...?

SO, EVEN
THOUGH HE
THOUGHT THAT
BLOW WAS HIS
BEST, IT
COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN!

BUT...WHY
WOULD
HIKO-SAN
TELL HIM
THAT?

OF COURSE.
NO MATTER
HOW PERFECT
THE STRIKE, IF
HE'S BOUND BY
THAT ARMOR,
THE FORCE
WILL BE
DECREASED...

...AND THE
FALSE SENSE OF
SECURITY ARMOR
GIVES HIM COULD
MAKE HIM
CARELESS!





BUT
TODAY
IS
DIFFERENT.

TODAY
A MAN
STANDS
BEFORE
YOU...

...WHOM
YOU
CANNOT
BEAT,
EVEN AT
FULL
STRENGTH.

SHRAAAAK







...OF
JOY, I
SHOULD
THINK.



BUT HE
SAW BURIED
DEEP WITHIN
THE SOUL
OF AN
UNFULFILLED
SAMURAI.

WE COULD
ONLY SEE
THIS MAN,
FUJI, AS A
MONSTER.



...HE
TOUCHED
IT.

AND...



HIKO
SEIJURO...

...IS A
TRULY
GREAT
MAN.



TEARS...





**FIGHT
!!!**



NOW!



**AT
LAST!
A
STRAIGHT-
UP...**

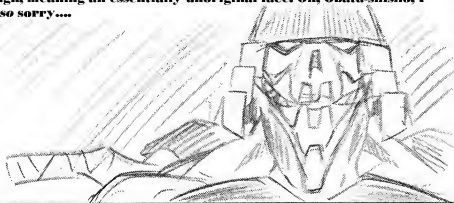
The Secret Life of Characters (38) —Fuji (Real Name Unknown)—

Before you go thinking the model is from *Evangelion*, you should know that the idea actually came from the "God-Soldier" in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. Right around the time it occurred to me that all ten of the Juppogatana ought to have made their appearances by then, I saw it (the movie) on TV and thought, "A giant...yes-s-s!" But then, just as quickly, I changed my mind, thinking, "Would Kenshin fighting a giant even be interesting?" Somehow, though, I couldn't let the idea go, and so, after some more thinking, I decided to have him appear in a fight against Hiko, the original *Ruroken* wild card.

When I first spoke to the editor about the idea, what he said to me was, "Are you sure?" Apparently his concern was that he was too big. Still unsure myself, I was then told by friends and by the assistants that it "sound(ed) fun—do it, do it!" I took a gamble, and it seems to have paid off, so, I'm pleased.

Another inspiration came from a Finnish folktale (or so I was told) called "Frost Giant," in which the monster-like giant turns out to have a heart. The "heart" of my character Fuji comes from there.

Design-wise (honestly speaking), the inspiration is the first "Eva." Hey, a lot went into the design! Originally, the face was taken from Watsuki's favorite, "Eva #2," but the assistants said it looked too similar, so the idea was rejected. Then, tired of seeing Watsuki holding his head and constantly groaning, one of the then-assistants (now the better-known Takei Hiroyuki of *Buddha Zone*) said, "How about this?" and did a skull-like riff on "Eva #1." Watsuki then added the idea of him biting the anchor rope of his helmet... and Fuji's face was finished. For the body, I did try very hard to keep it from being overly similar to *Eva*. For the face-face, some people called it right away: It's "Dogura Magura" from *Arabian Lamp-Lamp* by Obata Takeshi-shishō, and is the epitome of a monstrous character who's still somehow good-looking. It was an idea I wanted to work with. The schedule for the "Fuji" episodes was so tight, though, that I had no real time to work on the design, meaning an essentially unoriginal face. Oh, Obata-shishō, I am so, so, so sorry....



A collage of manga-style character faces expressing shock and awe. At the top center is a large, stylized face with a wide-open mouth and intense eyes. To its left and right are smaller faces, some with closed eyes and others with open mouths. Below the central face, the text "OHH ...!!" is written in a large, bold, stylized font. The background is filled with various other character faces, some looking up in surprise, others with expressions of determination or fear. The overall style is dynamic and energetic, typical of manga art.

**OHH
...!!**

Act 127
The Great Man vs. the Giant
(Part II)



Act 127
The
Great
Man
vs. the
Giant
(Part II)







THE LOCATION
WHERE FUJI'S
STANDING...
IT MUST BE
BARELY ONE
STEP OUTSIDE
HIKO-SAN'S
ZONE.



WHAT?

THE
ZONE...





IT'S NOT
SOMETHING
ANYONE
CAN JUST
JUMP INTO.

THE ZONE
OF AN ADEPT
SWORDSMAN
IS LIKE A
"SWORD
BARRIER."

!!

TP

MM. AND
THEN THE
FIGHT WILL
BE OVER
IN AN
INSTANT.

THIS
STANDSTILL
WILL
CONTINUE
FOR A
WHILE.

FUJI
WON'T
GO
FURTHER
FORWARD.

WHAT'S MOST
EFFECTIVE IS TO
MAKE ONE STRONG
STRIKE, CRUSHING
THE OPPONENT.
FUJI KNOWS THAT.

TO USE THAT
HUGE BODY TO
ITS POTENTIAL,
HE WON'T MAKE
SMALL MOVES.

OR WILL HIKO-DONO
DEFLECT THAT BLOW
AND SLASH INTO
HIS OPPONENT'S
EXPOSED BODY?

SO WILL FUJI,
WITHOUT THE
BURDEN OF HIS
ARMOR, FINISH
HIKO-DONO IN
HIS FIRST BLOW?

WHAT
ARE YOU
TWO
TALKING
ABOUT
?!

ARGH!

NO, IT
WON'T.

THE
BATTLE
WON'T
GO ANY
LONGER
THAN THAT.



HE
SEES
MORE
THAN WE
CAN, OR
EVER
WILL.

HIKO
SEIJURŌ
IS
KENSIN'S
MASTER.

WILL
YOU ALL
JUST
SHUT UP
FOR A
BIT?!

**HE'LL
WIN
THIS.**



ARE YOU
SO AFRAID
OF ME?



GLINT

THEN...
LET'S
GO.



...WHAT'S
WRONG? YOU
SUDDENLY
FROZE.

HOHHH!

TWO-
HANDED!



NO!!

HIS
POWER'S
DOUBLED
!!
IT'S
OVER!









FUJI?

I TOLD
YOU WE'RE
THE BEST,
EH?!

SEE?
NOT
EVEN A
TRACE
OF HIM
LEFT!

WA
HAHAHAHAHA



...WAS
EVEN
BETTER!



THAT
STRIKE...





AND
YOU
CAME
VERY
CLOSE.

HEH...

GO-!!!

HA!

九

頭

龍

閃

NINE-HEADED
"KUZU-RYUSEN"
DRAGON!

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...

飛

天

御

剣

流



WHA...

HE
WON'T
DIE, NOT
FROM
THAT.

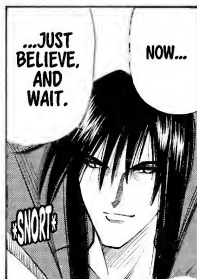
A BODY
THAT
HUGE CAN
WITHSTAND
QUITE A
BIT.



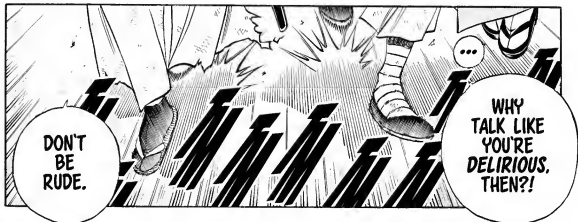
HE DIDN'T
HOLD
BACK
AT ALL.

HE'S NOT
RENSHIN,
THAT'S FOR
SURE.

YOU
KILL
HIM?







DON'T
BE
RUDE.

WHY
TALK LIKE
YOU'RE
DELIRIOUS,
THEN?!



HEH

THAT'S
PRETTY
OPTIMISTIC...
FOR YOU.

...MEANING,
AOI-YA
MUST BE
ALL RIGHT.



EVEN AN
IMAGINARY
KAORU-DONO
VOICE BRINGS
COMFORT.



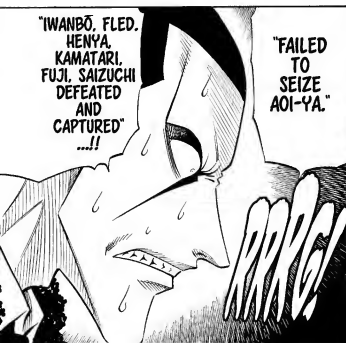
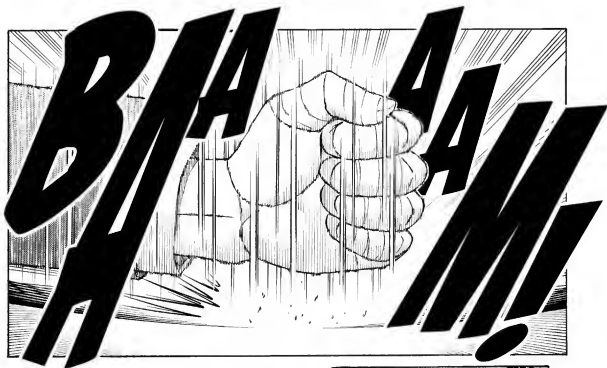
The Secret Life of Characters (39) —Elder Saizuchi—

If Fuji is the (*Nausicaä*) "God-Soldier," then Saizuchi must be the "Kushana."
...Actually, no. I take that back. The model for Saizuchi is an evil elf who tricks the giant in the "Frost Giant" story. Add the image of a giant-robot pilot, and Saizuchi is born. As Fuji himself is not an evil man, not at heart anyway, Saizuchi is left to bear the weight. Because of that, Watsuki does feel some compassion for him...it's not as though Saizuchi asked to be evil. Originally, there was set to be another battle (after the one with Fuji and Hiko) between Saizuchi and Okina...but it was cut for reasons of overall story-balance and also because of my own inner story-editor, who cried, "Who really wants to see two old codgers go at it, huh?! Who?!" Of all the Juppogatana, Saizuchi got the short end of the stick, and had to go off-stage before he could show what his massive brain could really do. Again, the "Senkaku effect" rears its ugly head (so to speak)—characters with the best noggins never get used to their full potential. Mm...maybe ten Juppogatana were too many. Six or seven may have been enough.

The model in terms of design should be obvious, at least to those of Watsuki's generation: It's "Dictator-General Luchi of the Akuda Republic" from the NHK puppet show, *Purin Purin Monogatari* ("Purin Purin Story"). (Odd title, now that I think about it.) When I was a child, it used to freak me out, how big his head was. It was an efficient design in that you could tell at a glance his IQ was 300 (maybe even 3,000?). The setting was cool, too, in that he was an alien from outer space who fell to Earth as an asteroid. And his brain was the main part of his body! What an interesting show, and how unusual for NHK. Reruns, please!

Post No
Bills







BUT WHY?!
THEY SHOULD
HAVE BEEN
INVINCIBLE!!
WHY?!

...THE
JUPPONGATANA
HAVE BEEN
NEARLY
ANNIHILATED.

SO...

THEY WERE
STRONGER
THAN US.

THAT'S
ALL
THERE IS
TO IT.

TUG

!

BUT,
FEAR
NOT!

"THE
STRONG
LIVE,
THE
WEAK
DIE."

"IN THIS
WORLD,
THE
STRONG
EAT THE
WEAK."

TAP TAP



Act 124

Sōjirō Strikes

FOR
I AM
STRONG.

AND IF
I FIGHT AS
WELL AS
ALL TEN
SWORDS...

...OUGHTN'T
THAT BE
ENOUGH?

仲伸
月宏





THUS
HAS HE
ALWAYS
BEEN
DRIVEN
TO
IMPROVE...

...UNTIL HIS
SKILL
SURPASSES
THAT OF
EVEN THE
BATTŌSAI.



...HE
LACKS
THE FOURTH.
SO HE CAN
NEVER BE
PREDICTED.

OF THE
FOUR
ELEMENTS
OF MAN—
HAPPINESS,
ANGER,
SORROW,
AND
PEACE...



...HE HAS
ANOTHER
VIRTUE, ONE
THAT MADE
ŌKUBO'S
ASSASSINATION
POSSIBLE.

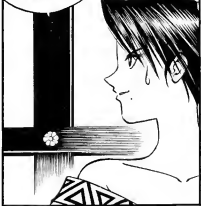
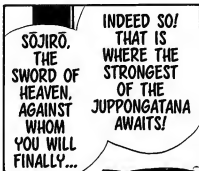
EVEN MORE,
THOUGH HE
DID NOT SHOW
IT TO THE
BATTŌSAI AT
SHINGETSU
VILLAGE...

LET'S SEE
IF YOU CAN
DEFEAT HIM,
BATTŌSAI.
LET'S JUST
SEE WHAT
YOU CAN DO.



THUS HAS
THE BOY, SETA
SŌJIRO, COME
INTO HIS OWN
UNDER MY
TUTELAGE.





...AS WELL
AS THE
SECRET,
AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI.

BUT
NOW THERE
IS THE
SAKABATŌ,
SHINUCHI...

OUR
BLADES
TELL WHO
WOULD
HAVE WON,
HAD WE
NOT.

WE BOTH
WALKED
AWAY,
CALLING
IT A
DRAW.

ALSO...

THIS
NEXT
TIME...

THIS
ONE MUST
NOT,
CANNOT
LOSE.





IT'S
BEEN A
LONG TIME,
HIMURA-
SAN.

I'M
GLAD TO
FIND YOU
WELL.

HERE I'M WONDERING
WHAT THIS NEXT
KNUCKLE-DRAGGER
WILL BE LIKE...AND
HE STARTS TALKING
LIKE KENSHIN.



ANOTHER
ONE...!

DON'T
WORRY.
WE JUST
LEARNED
THAT WE
LOST.

NO TI...
OH!
AOI-YA,
RIGHT?



WILL
YOU
STAND,
OR WITH-
DRAW?

DECIDE.
THERE'S
NO
TIME.



YOUR KIND GREETING
IS GRATEFULLY
ACCEPTED. BUT THIS
IS NO TIME FOR
CONVERSATION.





HŌJI-SAN
WAS
SURPRISED,
TOO.

BUT,
THAT'S
HOW
IT IS.



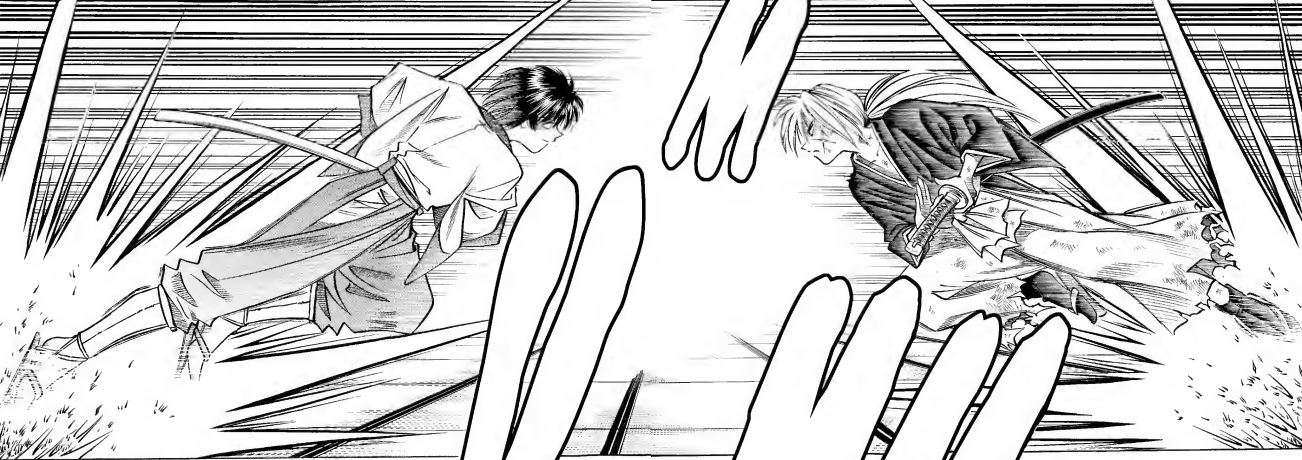
AND
SO...

I
CANNOT
DALLY
WITH
HIMURA-
SAN
ONLY.

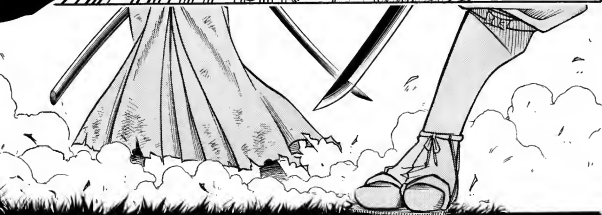
FOR I
ALONE
NOW HAVE
THE WORK
OF ALL THE
JUPPON-
GATANA.

SO,
ACTUALLY,
IT'S ME
WHO HAS
NO TIME...











A SWORD
SO
EXQUISITE,
RARER
THAN THE
NAGASONE
KOTETSU...

KIKUICHI-
MONJI...

MY OWN
BELOVED
KIKUICHIMONJI,
NORIMUNE,
IS NO
GOOD.

IT LOOKS
THE SAME...
BUT YOURS
IS THE
MUCH NICER
SWORD.

THAT'S
IT!

...HAS
BEEN
CRACKED
?!

WHAT DO YOU
MEAN, "THAT'S
IT"?! IT'S A
TINY LI'L
CRACK!



THIS
ROUND
IS HIS!

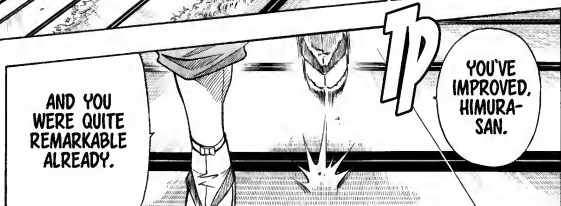
HOWEVER
THE LAST
DUEL
TURNED
OUT...

...KENSIN'S
FASTER AT
BATTOJUTSU!



GREAT
WORDS,
GREAT
SWORDS-
MEN.

ONE
"TINY LI'L
CRACK"
MARKS A
HUGE
DIFFERENCE.



AND YOU
WERE QUITE
REMARKABLE
ALREADY.

TP

YOU'VE
IMPROVED,
HIMURA-
SAN.



TP

HONESTLY,
THOUGH,
I DON'T
UNDERSTAND...

...HOW A
FELLOW
LIKE YOU
CAN BE SO
STRONG.

TP

IF I
APPLY
MYSELF
JUST A BIT
MORE...

WATCH.

WELL. STRONG
AS YOU MAY BE,
IT'S STILL NOT
ENOUGH TO DEFEAT
SHISHIO-SAMA.

?!





SO THAT'S HOW
HE COULD
ASSASSINATE OKUBO
IN A MOVING
CARRIAGE...!!

TH-
THAT
FOOTWORK
...!

MISSTEP,
I THINK.

OOPS.

"FREE TALK"

Long time no see. Watsuki here. I'm fighting "spring hibernation" as we speak. I am so sleepy...

It seems all I ever talk about here is games. Worried that you might start thinking of me as some crazy gamer, I thought about skipping the games this time...but then I heard some things I just have to share with you, so here we go. First: the rumors are true—"Samurai Spirits" in polygon! The news actually first reached me in early fall of last year, but then in the winter "TenSamu" came out, and I thought, "Ah, I knew it couldn't be true!" But then...! I was a little worried (die-hard 2D fan that I am), but based on screenshots, it seems I was worried for nothing. It'll probably be based on the original "Samurai Spirits," if only because of Nakoruru's outfit (she seems to have short sleeves, from what I can tell) but, I have to say, if the 2D versions of the game—which went four installments—end, I'll be mighty disappointed. The battle with Ambrosia's core hasn't ended, for one thing, and I want to see each character's full story, for another, so I'm really looking forward to the continuance of the 2D versions. Speaking of games, there's also the highly anticipated "FFVII"...I received it as a gift from someone (thanks, S-san!), but have yet to play it. Playing any RPGs while working on this series is probably a Bad Idea (the "Samurai" RPG is on hold, too) and, disappointing as it may be, I'll just have to wait.

Switching the topic to drawing style, I've heard quite a bit lately that my style has changed, but I myself believe that it's just another plateau since the series started. Specifically, I've reduced the number of lines in clothing and hair, and the eyes are smaller than they were before (I've been influenced a lot by Eva's Saitama Yoshiyuki in that department). The idea of one, "final" style may be appealing, but Watsuki plans to keep growing along with the series. It's been only three years since I've been able to support myself with manga, and so it would be pretty easy for me to think of my learning as "over." If I settle on a final style now, it'll seem as though something's ended. There are many ideal drawing styles, as Ohata-shishō so expertly demonstrates. The road is long, yes, but I plan to stay on it.

About the *RuroKen* anime...it's gotten very good recently, so much so that I've been able to watch it every week without anxiety, especially the part in Volume 7, where Kenshin parts with Kaoru. The director put so much work into it...it was so amazing, I have nothing whatsoever to add. I'd love it if that level of excellence could continue.

As for the manga...there's a new plot on the horizon. The upcoming story has lots of complexities and shades of meaning, so I'm having my struggles with it. I would like to reaffirm for you, as I've written elsewhere, that *RuroKen* will, essentially, have a happy ending. Please do keep that in mind as you enjoy the new plot. And so...see you next volume!



Act 129

伸
月
宏

Shukuchi (Reduced Earth)



るうに剣心

RURONI
KENSIN

瀬田宗次郎

SETA
SŌJIRO



WHUPS! I
MISSED.

AH,
WELL...

I'LL JUST
HAVE TO
FINISH HIM
WITH THE
NEXT ONE.

FP

IN FACT,
UNLESS I'M
MISTAKEN, IT
WAS EVEN
FASTER THAN...

HIS SPEED'S
ALMOST UP
THERE WITH
KENSIN'S
"GOD-SPEED"!

HE'S
FAST!!



NOBODY'S
FASTER THAN
KENSIN...
ARE THEY?!



NO, THAT
CAN'T
BE!

DON'T
ASK
ME.



HEY! WHAT
WAS THAT
MOVE HE
JUST DID,
BACK
THERE?

... "SHUKUCHI."

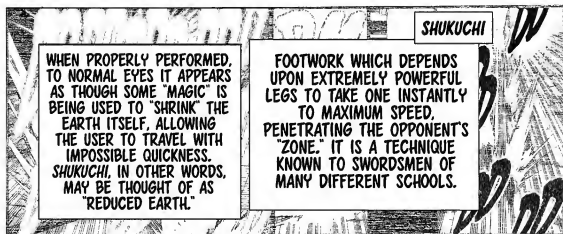
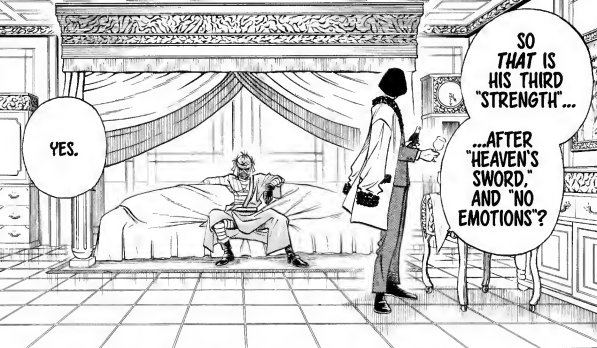
YE
WH-
WHY,
YOU...!!

YES, BUT ONLY
'CAUSE THAT'S
WHAT SHISHIO-SAMA
SAYS. THIS IS THE
FIRST TIME I'VE
ACTUALLY SEEN
HIM FIGHT.

H-HAVEN'T YOU
BEEN GOING ON
AND ON AND ON
ABOUT HOW
GREAT HE IS?!







THE
SHUKUCHI
OF SŌJIRO
IS SPEED...

...THAT
DOES
NOT
APPEAR
IN
SIGHT.



REALLY,
IT WAS
THREE
STEPS
BEFORE
SHUKUCHI.

?!
GRIN

...TO BE
FRANK,
THAT
WASN'T
SHUKUCHI.

AND
YET,
HIMURA-
SAN...

GRIN



THIS
TIME, I WILL
GO WITH TWO
STEPS BEFORE
SHUKUCHI.

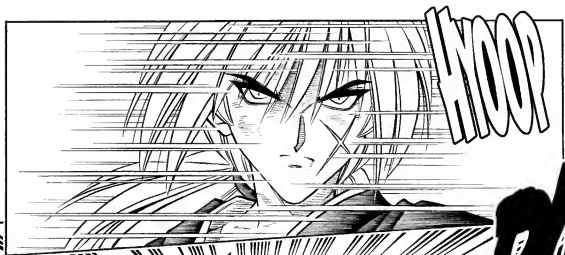


HERE
GOES.



TP
TP
TP
AFTER THE
BATTLE WITH
SENKAKU AT
SHINGETSU VILLAGE,
I THOUGHT THIS
SPEED MIGHT BE
ENOUGH TO
FINISH YOU.

TP
TP
TP
MY
SINCERE
APOLOGIES
FOR TAKING
YOU TOO
LIGHTLY.









高島

WHAT
THE-?!





AND SINCE HE HAS
NO EMOTIONS TO
TIP OFF WHAT HE'S
ABOUT TO DO, HE
SEEMS EVEN FASTER!



IT'S NOT JUST
HIS LEGS—HIS
BODY'S FAST,
TOO!



IF ONLY HIS SPEED
COULD BE USED
AGAINST HIM, TO
COUNTER HIM,
HEAD-ON...

...THE
STRONGEST
AND FASTEST
CHARGE OF
THE HITEN
MITSURUGI
SCHOOL.



WITH
THE MOVE
ACQUIRED
ALONG
WITH THE
AMAKAKERU
RYU NO
HIRAMEKI...



NO.

WHAT'S
DONE,
IS HIM.

!!

THIS
ONE IS
NOT AS
FAST AS
HE...

HE DODGED
THE KUZU-
RYŪSEN...
WHICH NO
ONE SHOULD
BE ABLE TO
DODGE!

...AND,
WORSE,
NEITHER
IS HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ!!

HH

HH

HM?

NNK!

TPP

I
THOUGHT
FOR SURE
I'D GOTTEN
YOU THAT
TIME.

THAT'S
ODD.

FP

To Be Continued
in Volume 16:
Providence

GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because *Kenshin* is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of *Kenshin’s* *sakabatō* and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “*Hitokiri Battōsai*,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “*Battōsai Himura*.”

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—*Kawakami Gensai*, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist *patriots* who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Juppongatana

Written with the characters for “ten” and “swords,” Shishio’s *Juppongatana* are literally that—the ten generals or “swords” he plans to use in his overthrow of Japan

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of *Himura Kenshin*

kenjutsu

The art of fencing; sword-arts; *kendō*

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you’re more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the “superior-to-inferior” form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

Amakakeru Ryū no Hirameki

Lit., “Heavens-Bridging Dragon Spark” (as in spark of “inspiration,” not “fire” or “flame”). Final or “succession” move of *Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū*, it incorporates everything Kenshin has been taught so far—including the overriding will to *live*. Also known as “Dragon Flight of Heaven.”

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

Benten Mawashi

Special technique of the cross-dressing Kamatari. From *Benten*, one of Buddhism’s *Shichifukujin* or “Seven Lucky Gods” + *mawasu*, to “turn, rotate, unwind or unwrap” ...as in a randy lord grabbing one end of a young lady’s *obi* and sending her spinning, chuckling lustily all the while.

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”).

dōgi

Martial-arts clothing (uniform)

dojo or dōjō

Martial-arts training hall

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-san*; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*; renamed *Tokyo* (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of **-san**, **-sama** is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as **"-san"**).

Shinsengumi

Elite, notorious, government-sanctioned and exceptionally skilled swordsman-supporters of the military government (**Bakufu**) which had ruled Japan for nearly 250 years, the **Shinsengumi** ("newly selected corps") were established in 1863 to suppress the **loyalists** and to restore law and order to the blood-soaked streets of **Kyoto**.

shōgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shōgunate

See **Tokugawa Bakufu**

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of **"Edo"** to **"Tokyo"** is a marker of the start of the **Meiji Restoration**

Kyoto

Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the **Meiji Restoration** in 1868

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; **Ishin Shishi**

Midare Benten

Another of Kamatari's special techniques. From *midareru*, "out of order, in chaos, in disorder, be corrupted (in morals)" + *Benten*...thus, "Disheveled *Benten*" (sexual connotation intended). Worth noting: *Benten* (alternately known as "Benzaiten") is the only female member of the Seven Lucky Gods.

Miyōmimane Ryūtsuisen

Yahiko's "Do-It-Yourself" version (*miyō*, to observe + *mimane*, to imitate what one has seen) of Kenshin's **Ryūtsuisen**. Kind of like a "monkey see, monkey do" thing, only...respectful, thus "Homage Hit."

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the **Tokugawa Bakufu** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

Oniwabanshū

Elite group of *onmitsu* or "spies" of the **Edo** period, also known as *ninja* or *shinobi*

patriots

Another term for **Ishin Shishi**...and, when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

Ryūtsuisen

Kenshin's "Dragon-Hammer Strike"

sakabatō

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again